

VZCZCXRO4524

PP RUEHDU RUEHGI RUEHJO RUEHMR

DE RUEHKI #0863 1521211

ZNR UUUUU ZZH

P 011211Z JUN 06

FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4002

INFO RUEHXR/RWANDA COLLECTIVE

RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY

RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC

RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC

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UNCLAS KINSHASA 000863

SIPDIS

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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: KABILA CONTINUES TALKING TO FOREIGN PRESS

REF: A. KINSHASA 620

1B. KINSHASA 834

11. (U) President Joseph Kabila continued talking to the foreign press with an interview published in the May 25 edition of the French newspaper "Le Monde." In the article, Kabila presented himself as a true Congolese who is ready to work to rebuild and reunify the Congo. Kabila also said the work required to improve the DRC is far more important than "dialogue" among politicians.

12. (U) The overall tone of the article painted Kabila as a politician seemingly unconcerned with the outcome of the July 30 presidential elections. Kabila assured his interviewer that if he loses, he will leave the presidency and do something else, such as working in the private sector on development issues. Kabila also said he had no intention of following the example of other African leaders who cling to power indefinitely, saying, "I will never do that."

13. (U) Kabila, as in previous interviews (ref A), outlined what he believes are his accomplishments as the DRC's president. Kabila said he has been fully engaged in reunifying the DRC and establishing peace throughout the country. The President claimed a new Congo was being born and it is necessary to continue the task of returning hope to the people. He also pointed to the return of economic growth and the support of international donors as signs that the DRC will be a model for all of Africa in the future. The President cautioned, however, that the political climate in the DRC is troubling, as certain politicians in Kinshasa are supporting xenophobic fears. Kabila added that those who try to divide the population risk "blowing up the house from the inside," and that justice will be obligated to take care of such people.

14. (SBU) Comment: Kabila revealed nothing new about himself in this interview. It does appear, however, that with his second interview in as many months to the foreign press, Kabila is concerned about improving his image in the international community. Nonetheless, Kabila's statement that the work of rebuilding the Congo is more important than political dialogue is worth noting. As the call for a "dialogue" and "consensus" (which would likely further delay elections) among certain political groups continues to grow (ref B), Kabila seems to have declared he is not in favor of such an idea. End comment.

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